Information Security and Privacy Rights of Social Media Users Survey on Meta Platforms

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Abstract

Social media has positively impacted our lives as well as being a benefit of modern lifestyle it is mostly used for entertaining, information sharing, news, and learning. Users did not really give their information's security to social media much consideration when using it. In this paper that is based on a survey, researchers have tried to analyze how well users understand social media information security and privacy. Our assessment indicates there is still a need for social media users to be informed more about information security options that are accessible.

Keywords: Social media, information security, Privacy Rights Meta Platforms

An introduction to social media.

We are becoming increasingly dependent on social media platforms as engaged members of society. Our culture and way of life have been changed as a result of these networks. Through transforming our core ideas of privacy, social media has altered the way we communicate with one another. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technology to create an interactive discourse out of communication. Social media is a new source of information and the ability to unite individuals around shared interests, facilitate their contact, and enable the sharing of ideas all of which are necessary for knowledge creation through social media opens up possibilities for the growth of social networks (Mesquita et al., 2016). There are three main components that may be found on most social media platforms. They allow individuals to ''construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system'' (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). There has been a rise in privacy concerns as a result of people spending more time on social media platforms, both because of the data that is gathered and applied by the organization and because of the potential negative effects of widespread disclosure of private information on interpersonal uses.

It is crucial to define what we understand by social media platforms before getting too far into its history. The majority of us are pretty good at recognising social media, but we could all use to be more particular. The following description is only one of several that can be found if you do a fast Google search for social media definition, but they will all be similar in some manner. Jones (2015) described social media as various types of online communication which's people utilise to build networks, groups, and collectives in order to exchange information, thoughts,

communications, and other content such as videos and photos. These many forms of online communication are collectively referred to as social media. There are two key points in this definition. Firstly, social media must include online communication. This means that the history of social media cannot start before the internet was invented and widely used. Secondly, consumer content is what makes social media work. This is the reason regular websites and blogs are not part of the social media world. Users can only post to these sites if they are in a certain group, and there are a lot of rules about what they can post. Most people believe that the development of social media may be traced back to the acceleration of technological advancements in communication that began toward the close of the nineteenth century, but the true start of social media can be traced back to the early 2000s with the introduction of Web 2.0, also known as the "golden area" of the Internet.

What is Meta?

Meta Platforms Inc. (Meta), formerly Facebook Inc., offers social networking, advertising, and business insight solutions. The company's metaverse virtual-reality vision creates an environment where humans may interact with technology. *"Meta builds technologies that help people connect, find communities, and grow businesses. When Facebook launched in 2004, it changed the way people connect. Apps like Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp further empowered billions around the world. Now, Meta is moving beyond 2D screens toward immersive experiences like augmented and virtual reality to help build the next evolution in social technology."*(The

Facebook Company | Meta,2021). Users from all over the world are able to interact with their friends, relatives, and coworkers through the use of the firm's main priorities, which include Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Additionally, the company assists users in locating new goods and services offered by regional as well as international companies. Individuals have the opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas, images, films, and other activities via mobile devices and personal computers with a variety of audiences, ranging from their closest friends to the general public (GlobalData, 2022).

Importance of privacy and information security in social media.

May indeed accepting social media terms and conditions when creating profile accounts indicate we have given up our privacy rights as a society?. According to Fuchs, et al., social media and social networks"have regularly experienced user objections against revisions of the privacy policy and the conditions of use that are perceived to bring about privacy dangers and increased surveillance" (Fuchs, et al. 2013). To handle massive amounts of data, social networking companies are using cloud computing. The Internet is needed to manage the vast amounts of text, images, audio, and video. Cloud databases run Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Facebook users can share files with friends worldwide (Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015). The same platform may intelligently gather the user's memories and give a gallery of archived files from the first post to the latest. Instagram is the second-most popular social media site. It is similar to Facebook, except that it keeps track of a user's followers. Finally, WhatsApp lets users have voice conversations, video calls, and transfer files worldwide with the recipient's

contact information. The three social networking sites improve their users' experiences by storing their data in the cloud and subscribing to customer management services that help them provide social networking services quickly and stylishly.

The Concern for Privacy in the Age of social media.

We are currently struggling with how to best safeguard the privacy of social media users. Online platforms and mobile phone apps are just two of the many methods to access social media. To get the most out of their social media experience, users take advantage of every feature offered by every service. Because of the abundance of options, people are more worried than ever about keeping their social media activity and personal details secure (Bowen, & Stacks, 2014). In light of this, it is a challenging task to use social media in a safe environment, where users can feel secure disclosing personal information. In reality, social networking app developers are focusing on improving, releasing, and adding to the functionality of preexisting features. However, they give only a cursory thought to protecting the personal data of their customers (F. Groeneveld, B. Borsboom, B. van Amstel, 2010). Regular updates to social media sites' security protocols are made to patch holes that have been discovered or are otherwise suspected to exist. Some websites will alert you when changes have been made to your settings, while others may make changes without your knowledge. The frequency with which this occurs and whether or not you are notified depends on the website you are using. That's why it's important to check your preferences and settings regularly to make sure they're still accurate reflections of your intended use. A social media security strategy should equip users to fulfil obligations without putting their personal safety or privacy at risk. In order to make one, you must

first identify the sensitive locations that need safeguarding, then decide who will be in charge of providing security, and finally figure out how that security will be implemented. Everything from the computers people can use at work to the smartphones they are issued to the security of the network and any firewalls that may be put in place must be considered as part of any comprehensive social media policy. However, users of social media platforms often don't stop to consider this critical issue, which is concerning because the data they share with social applications is personal and confidential and should be safeguarded (Karvounidis, T., Chimos, K., Bersimis, S., &Douligeris, C, 2014). Many people use social media without paying any thought to how their data is stored or protected. They're just making use of the social networking app's functionality in a way that works best for them. Therefore, Meta company mentioned that we collect Meta user's data to deliver the service, develop the product, and keep users safe and secure. We constantly improve data collection and consumption. Discover how we use users' data on Meta.

Third-party applications of social media (Meta).

Third-party apps are developed by developers other than the device manufacturer or website owner. The Third-party that access account data pose a security concern. Account or profile information can be used to hack or replicate the account. Users of social media platforms don't have a clear way to choose the level of privacy they want for applications. They have no control over what information third-party applications can see or use. This fact poses significant risks to users' privacy by allowing third-party applications to access users' personal information. For instance, Facebook applications have access to the information that users have made

public for everyone to see, as well as the public information of the user's profile. This includes the user's user ID, name, email address, gender, birthday, current city, profile picture URL, and the user IDs of the user's friends who have also connected with your application, as defined in as basic account information(Meta, 2022). In regard to applications and the privacy of users, Meta makes it very clear in which information can be directly accessed from an application and what an application should do if it needs access to a user's private information, either from the user themselves or from friends of the user. In the first situation, the application has to make an explicit request for extended authorizations in order to gain access to the users' personal information, such as their photographs. In general, the application needs to ask the user whether they are willing to grant it extended permissions before it can access any additional private information. Again, the responsibility for protecting one's privacy lies with the user, who can even grant the application access to the content of the majority of her friends (Meta, 2022). On the other hand, the permission is granted not by the friend who is affected but by the person who uses the application.

So, we can raise several questions regarding social media user's information security and privacy rights try to respond to them from our point of view after reviewing Meta documentation regarding information security and privacy.

1. How frequently do users read the privacy and policy conditions of social media platforms before signing up an account?

2. How do participants manage privacy features on social media platforms? and

how may users' information be used and shared?

3. How can we make privacy clearer as well as less difficult for social media users so they feel more comfortable and secure?

Method

This section will describe how to implement an application inside Meta company platforms for users concerning about information security and privacy rights of social media users. During the study we distributed 100 forms on Erbil city residents. We asked them about their gender, age, education levels and which social media accounts they use in Meta company (Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp). We have randomly selected our research samples in order to collect information about their opinion about security and privacy bout social media. We believed this, will be a strong technical approach to this matter. We also tried to know about their usage like, the platforms form Meta company they use as well as if they have any intentions to read and readjust their social media platform accounts.

Our Contribution:

We desire to contribute to the investigation of this issue in a manner that is unique to us. In this study, we make an effort to investigate the issue from both of its perspectives, i.e., the level of security and privacy that is already accessible to users, as well as the lack of accessibility of privacy and security settings inside social media platforms. Our goal is to investigate the matter in question and come up with a solution that is not just hopeful but also long-lasting and practical. We believe that the participation of

Polytechnic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
Volume 5 No. 1 (2024)
Regular research paper: Published 08th May 2024

people who use social media is extremely vital in order to get to the bottom of this matter and find out the truth. Therefore, we need to establish a survey plan for this, which will include a questionnaire that contains the definitions of the problem from a variety of angles. This will allow us to assess the level of the problem, and based on that, we will propose some solution to the issue.

Aims

Our goal is to create a study technique in response to the issue statement and the questions posed in the preceding section in order to close the gap that currently exists in the field of social security of users' information. In this case, we are not creating a new security method to safeguard data; rather, we will be making use of present security and privacy controls to accomplish our goals.

Objectives

We want to better protect social media users by using the current security measures and privacy settings. Simplifying privacy settings, fostering self-awareness, and teaching users about the need of protecting their online privacy are all simple ways to do this. Additionally, we may take measures such as creating a variety of training and monitoring systems that are smart enough to protect data in much the same way a guard would.

Results

Data Analyzing

Results from each stage of the study will be presented here, organised in a logical way according to the questions asked. Our intentions in asking these questions have been met, since we will be able to use the responses to further develop our theories on privacy, disprove those of others, or arrive at whole

new findings. Our primary interest is in identifying the most widely utilised social media platforms as well as the motivations behind their consumption. The number of distributed forms were 100 forms randomly on Erbil city residents 92 of them have been returned.

Gender	No.	percentage
Male	48	%52.1
Female	44	%47.82
Total	92	%100

Table (1) gender of the research sample

Table (1) shows the gender of the research sample. (48) of them are males out of 92 which is about %52.1 of the samples. On the other hand, (44) of them are females with %47.82.

Education level	No.	percentage
Higher education	5	%5.4
Bachelor or diploma	37	%40.2
high school	42	%45.6
Primary school	5	%5.4
Not educated	3	%3.2
	92	%100

Table (2) the education level of the participants

Table (2) shows the level of education of participants of the sample who answered this part of the questionnaire and had a total number of (92). The results indicate that (5) participants have a higher degree (master or doctorate) and these represent 5.4%. Moreover, (37) participants have a diploma or a bachelor's degree, they represent 40.2% of the total number. Furthermore, the number of participants with a high school is 42 representing 45.6%. on the other hand the number of participants who only

attended primary school is (5) representing 5.4% and 3 of the participants do not read and write with 3.2%. It can be inferred that, most of the participants are educated at different levels, and only a few of them do not read and write. This can be generalized to the population of Erbil city.

Answers	No.	percentage
yes	92	%100
No	0	%0
Total	92	%100

Table (3) having account on Meta platform

It can be noted that most of Erbil residents have social media accounts on Meta platforms by the result of table (3) with %100 percent of them answering with yes for having social media accounts on Meta platforms.

Platform	No.	Percentage
Facebook	90	%97.8
Instagram	72	%78.2
WhatsApp	86	93.4

Table (4) type of the platforms

Its Clear from the above table, most of the participants have accounts on all the three Meta platforms. Mostly, on Facebook with %97.8 and lees on Instagram with %78.2.

Period	No.	Percentage
More than Five Years	44	%47.8
Between Three and Five years	33	%35.8
Between One to	15	%16.3
Three years		
Less than One year	0	%0
total	92	%100

Table (5) Period of having the accounts

Table (5) can be seen that, most of the participants using these platforms for a long time. (44) of them which they are around %48 is using the platforms for more than Five years. While almost %36 have been on these platforms between Three to Five years. Moreover only (15) of the that represent %16.3 are on Meta platforms between One to Three years and None of them are new users with %0 of those who answered less than One year.

Answers	No.	Percentage
Yes	11	%11.9
No	55	%59.97
Just a few of the conditions	26	%28.2
Total	92	%100

Table (6) shows checking privacy and policy while signing up by the participants

The table above shows that, the total of (55) of the research sample which they are about %60 have not read the privacy and the policy when they created their accounts. On the opposite side only (11) of them read the conditions with %11.9 and (26) of the participants read only a few of the conditions with approximately %29.

Reason	No.	Percentage
Too long	69	%75
Difficult to	32	%34.7

Polytechnic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences
Volume 5 No. 1 (2024)
Regular research paper: Published 08th May 2024

understand		
Not interested	12	%13
Language issues	63	%68.4
Other	1	%1.08

Table (7) reason of not reading the conditions

It is obvious from table (8) that more than half of the participants (%52) adjusted their privacy settings only after the creation of their accounts. Almost %12 of the research sample their nearest readjustment of the settings was few weeks ago. It's Noted that no one (%0) of them readjusted their settings days ago.

Time	NO.	Percentage
Few Days ago	0	%0
Few Weeks ago	11	%11.9
Few Months ago	8	%8.6
Years ago	25	%27.1
Only when created the account	48	%52.1

Table (8) last readjusting privacy settings by the participants

The number of respondents to this question was (86), (52) of them with almost (%57) faced a problem because of misunderstanding the privacy and policy settings. (28) respondents said no but heard people facing problems. On the other hand, only (6) with the percentage of (%6.5) said no and never heard someone have a problem before.

Answers	No.	Percentage
Yes	52	%56.5
No but I heard of people had problems	28	%30.4

No and never Heard anyone have a problem	6	%6.5
Not answered	6	%6.5

Table (9) facing a problem because o misunderstanding the privacy and policy

A total of (92) respondents out of (92) answered this question. (69) of them (%75) replied that they wish to make changes to make privacy and policy clearer and more understandable.

Answer	No	Percentage
Yes	69	%75
No	23	%25

Table (10) whiling to make privacy and policy clearer and more understandable

On the other side, only %25 of them replied with no. We can conclude that nearly three-quarters of the population of Erbil city prefer to protect themselves into getting to troubles and they are willing to make it more understandable for them.

Findings

- Most of the research sample who were almost half male and half females mostly middle school holders, are on social media. Almost all of them Meta platforms users for more than five years.
- %60 of research samples did not read and check privacy and policy when they signed up. While just %28 read just few conditions.
- Most of the research sample are giving the reason of not understanding for skipping the terms and conditions which means language plays a big role for that.

- We found out most of the research sample do not adjust their privacy settings regularly. To prove our point, (%52) of them adjusted it only when they signed up.
- The research sample are whiling that, the authority help them in order to make the privacy and policy of the platforms more clear.
- Third part applications are risky for the users shared information and privacy.

Suggestions and conclusion

- We suggest to avoid this problem the government should take an action by enhancing the self-awareness of users about the importance of information security and privacy policy.
- The third-part applications of social media should be controlled by the government since they play big role in breaking users' privacy and information.
- Some of the important points should be translated and published on the authorities offecial websites.
- Finally, we can say that to avoid the previous issues we have to work on different aspects, education through all educational levels starting from schools to the higher education, the social media companies and media channels and Government and law enforcement.

Appendix

Research Questions:

1- How frequently do users read the privacy and policy conditions of social media platforms before signing up an account?
2- How do participants manage privacy features on social media platforms? and how may users' information be used and shared?
3- How can we make privacy clearer as well as less difficult for social media users so they feel more comfortable and secure?
4- How the companies secure their users information and privacy.
5- How does users accept companies' privacy and policy.
6- How does these social media platforms effect on Information security and privacy user rights

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